GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:712
ANSWERED ON:26.07.2001
USE OF SOLAR ENERGY
DILIP KUMAR MANSUKHLAL GANDHI

Will the Minister of NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have decided to undertake research work to explore immense potential for use of solar energy in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken in the matter so far;

(c) whether the Government have also decided to provide better and cheaper solar stoves in the country; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (INDEPENDENT CHARGE), (SHRI M. KANNAPPAN)

(a) & (b): Research and development work aimed at utilizing solar energy through both the thermal and photovoltaic routes has been going on in the country for over two decades. A large number of research institutes, universities and industrial organizations are engaged in this work. The efforts made so far have resulted in the development and manufacture of a number of devices and systems for various applications. These include solar water heaters, solar cookers, solar dryers, distillation units, solar lighting systems, pumps, power plants, etc. These systems are being installed all over the country under different schemes of the Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources.

The Ministry is also continuing to support research projects in different institutions of the country with a view to improving the technology and reducing the costs of solar energy products. Among the major areas being studied are:

(i) Development of thin film solar cells based on amorphous silicon and other materials

(ii) Development of components used in photovoltaic systems

(iii) Design of energy efficient buildings

(iv) Development of newer types of solar cookers and cooking systems

(v) Solar detoxification

(c) & (d): The Ministry had been supporting the dissemination of only one type of solar cooker, namely the box cooker, under its subsidy scheme implemented till 1993-94. After the scheme was discontinued and a market orientation was given to the programme, other types of cookers including solar cookers with electrical backup and concentrating type solar cookers have become available in the country. Some of the newer designs are being supported under a demonstration scheme of the Ministry. They have the advantages of fast cooking or being able to cook a larger quantity of food. A low cost cardboard solar cooker has also been recently introduced.